



WALTON RELATIONS

Volume 1, Issue 4

Walton County Genealogy Society

January 2010

Newspaper Archive

Michael Strickland has extracted important genealogy information from early issues of *The Breeze* newspaper. The extracts are being placed online at www.waltoncountyheritage.org/wp/ in a database that offers several ways to retrieve information:

- **Search:** The database search engine is excellent. You can enter a word and pull up every entry in the database that contains that word.
- **Categories:** Categories include the month of publication or the type of news, such as an obituary or wedding announcement, and can be searched by selecting from the drop-down menu.
- **Tags:** Tags may be surnames or places and are indexed in a “cloud” on the right side of the page. The larger the name, the more entries in the database.

As of this writing, the newspaper archive contains excerpts from April through December 1910. This project is in its infancy and more excerpts will be added virtually daily, so please check it often. Also, please let us know if you would like to contribute excerpts to this project.

Genealogy Society Meeting

The next meeting of the Genealogy Society will be **Saturday, January 9, at 10:00 at the Walton County Heritage Museum**. Those who have collected data for our Magnolia Cemetery Project are asked to bring it to the meeting on a thumb drive, if possible. We will discuss the upcoming History Fair, which will be on March 13, including our participation in it. We will also plan lectures and training sessions for the coming year. Please join us!



McLeod Family Urn at Magnolia Cemetery

Walton County Heritage Museum
Wednesday-Saturday, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
1140 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435
850-951-2127
www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org
WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net

25 Most Popular Genealogy Blogs

By Heather Henderson, ProGenealogists.com

Genealogy blogging is all the rage and on the rise. A Google search for genealogy blogs currently results in nearly half a million options, with over seven times that number for "family history" blogs. Nielsen Buzz Metrics BlogPulse shows a steady trend for genealogy and family history blogs with spikes correlating to celebrity family history activity in the news. Of the millions, 25 surface as the most popular all-around genealogy blogs, with a tie for 25th place according to rankings from Technorati.

Top 25 Genealogy Blogs as of 3 April 2009:

1. [About.com Genealogy](#) (Kimberly Powell)
2. [Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter](#) (Dick Eastman)
3. [Genea-Musings](#) (Randy Seaver)
4. [Creative Gene](#) (Jasia)
5. [DearMYRTLE](#) (Pat Richley)
6. [AnceStories](#) (Miriam Midkiff)
7. [Genealogue](#) (Chris Dunham)
8. [footnoteMaven](#) (Anonymous)
9. [Genetic Genealogist](#) (Blaine Bettinger)
10. [Tracing The Tribe: Jewish Genealogy Blog](#) (Schelly Talalay Dardashti)
11. [GenaBlogie](#) (Craig Manson)
12. [Olive Tree Genealogy Blog](#) (Lorine McGinnis Schulze)
13. [Steve's Genealogy Blog](#) (Stephen J. Danko)
14. [24-7 Family History Circle](#) (Juliana Smith)
15. [TransylvanianDutch](#) (John Newmark)
16. [GenDisasters](#) (Stu Beitler)
17. [Genealogy Insider @ FamilyTree](#) (Diane Haddad)
18. [Think Genealogy](#) (Mark Tucker)
19. [California Genealogical Society and Library Blog](#) (California Genealogical Society)
20. [The Genealogy Guys](#) (George G. Morgan and Drew Smith)
21. [CanadaGenealogy](#), or, 'Jane's Your Aunt' (Diane Rogers)
22. [Ancestry Insider](#) (Anonymous)
23. [GenealogyBlog](#) (Leland Meitzler)
24. [Ancestor Search Blog](#) (Kathi)
25. [tie] [Genealogue](#) (Hugh Watkins)
26. [tie] [Legacy News](#) (Legacy Tree Software)

[If you have favorite blogs or websites, especially those related to Walton County genealogy, let us know!—DM]

Military Spotlight: 1st Lt. Ewart T. Sconiers

By Pamela Sconiers Whitelock

1st Lt. Ewart T. Sconiers, eldest son of Warren and Maude Sconiers and brother of Kenneth D. Sconiers, was born in DeFuniak Springs on November 29, 1915. Sconiers—U.S. Army Air Corps, 97th Bomb Group, 14th Bomb Squadron—first drew national attention on August 21, 1942, during the raid over Rouen. West Gallagher of the Associated Press wrote, “A slight young Florida bombardier who washed out of flying school and a half conscious pilot with his arm nearly torn off emerged as the heroes today of the great North Sea sky battle, which saw American Flying Fortresses shoot down or damage twelve German fighters, although outnumbered five to one. Stubble-bearded airmen who had not been to bed for 36 hours told how the gravely wounded pilot and the bombardier who had never flown a Fortress before brought the big ship (*Johnny Reb*) back safely after Nazi bullets had riddled two of the four motors and killed the co-pilot.” As a result, Sconiers earned the Distinguished Service Cross “for courage and skill in the face of great danger and overwhelming odds,” and for “upholding the highest traditions of the military forces of the United States.



Another article cited Sconiers’ “nerve, skill, and courage” and declared his “feat stands out for the reason that it proves so plainly how initiative plays such an important part in the fighting today.”

Initiative wasn’t new to Sconiers. A child of the Great Depression whose single mother already had lost two children, Sconiers was shining shoes at age ten. Valuing education, he persisted with studies until the need for money to support himself prompted him to drop out of high school so he could be trained as a barber (working with his uncle Ralph Spence), earn sufficient income, and return to graduate in 1936. Barbering and frugality allowed Sconiers to afford college and, before enlisting in the Army on September 16, 1941, he attended the University of Florida for two and a half years. He dreamed that after the war he and Kenneth would “get started in DeFuniak with what we always worked towards. . . . See you can go ahead and get started as soon as the war is over. I’m going back to school and get myself a law degree and a B.S. in Agr.Economics [intending to grow timber in South America and import it to the U.S.]. So, let’s keep our chins up and look forward until our day.”

That day never came. Lt. Sconiers also was the bombardier of the B-17 *Johnny Reb, Jr.*, but this Fortress would not survive the Lorient Raid of October 21, 1942. He and the crew were shot down, taken captive, and imprisoned in Stalag Luft III (of Great Escape fame). About 14 months after capture, Sconiers slipped on ice at the camp, ruptured his ear drum, developed complications, was taken to a hospital in what is now Lubin, Poland, and died there January 24, 1944. He was given a formal burial but had remained “unrecoverable” by our government until 2006 when his case was reopened and his likely burial site discovered. Sconiers is the only American yet unrecovered from Stalag Luft III. He is on the government’s list for recovery, and his niece (his official next-of-kin) is optimistic that in 2010 he will be returned for burial next to his mother at Southwide Baptist Church Cemetery.

Pamela Sconiers Whitelock (next of kin) traveled to Poland last April to visit the grave of Ewart Sconiers and the remains of Stalag Luft III. She has established a website, www.BringSconiersHome.com, and is asking his family and friends to search for and share with her any photos or memories they may have. Pam may be reached at pamwhitelock@att.net or by phone at 850-814-1982.

Resources

In past issues of *Walton Relations*, we have listed some resources for you to try. For the first eleven in this series, please see the previous issues of *Walton Relations*, which are available on the Genealogy Society page at www.waltoncountyheritage.org.

12. High school and college yearbooks. These sources can help locate a relative or provide clues for other resources for your search. Check school websites for online yearbooks and auction sites such as eBay to purchase old yearbooks at a reasonable price.

13. Family pedigrees. These are family groups already linked in a computer system. Accessing an individual's family group sheet in a linked pedigree will also give you access to all of the records that are linked to that individual. Two great sources are [Kindred Connections](#) and [Family History Library](#). Be sure to make an appointment to check the database on the Genealogy Society computer at the Museum. **Wayne Sconiers** has about 42,000 names in his records, which he is willing to share with you. If you live out of the area or want to make an appointment to use the database, contact Wayne at waynesconiers@embarqmail.com.

14. U.S. Immigration records. Two great sources are [Ellis Island Records](#) and [Ancestry.com](#).

15. Social Security Death Index. This is a database of people whose deaths were reported to the Social Security Administration (SSA) beginning about 1962. The best source is [RootsWeb.com](#).

16. History Fair. Attend the Walton County History Fair on March 13, 2010, at the Walton County Fairgrounds in DeFuniak Springs. Not only will you view dozens of interesting and informative displays, but you will be able to make personal connections with others researching their genealogy.

My Favorite Websites

Part Two - By Wayne Sconiers

<http://distantcousin.com/>

Distant Cousin is an online archive of genealogy records and scanned images of historical documents from a wide variety of sources, such as newspaper obituaries, city directories, census records, ship lists, school yearbooks, military records, and more. In all there are more than 6 million genealogy records from over 1,500 sources online. There are no fees or memberships required to use the records at Distant Cousin.

<http://www.linkpendium.com/genealogy/USA/sur/surc-S/surc-Sco/sur-Sconiers/>

My surname lookup, various records.

<http://www.findagrave.com/>

Find cemeteries, some maps, some interments.

<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>

Land records, surveys.

<http://www.cousinconnect.com/>

Review and post genealogy queries.

<http://www.genfan.com/surnames.php>

Our Family Genealogy Pages - Surname search, some cemeteries, etc.

http://www.civilwarflorida.com/site/soldiers/soldier_index.php

Master Soldier Index

<http://www.civilwarmicrofilm.com/>

Civil War microfilm

http://www.psy.fsu.edu/~thompson/fl_acw/fl_acw.html

Florida Civil War Genealogy

<http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/PensionFiles/>

Confederate Pension application files

<http://www.db229.com/>

Santa Rosa County GenWeb project

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www.WaltonCountyHeritage.org

Walton Relations is a publication of the Walton County Genealogy Society. Wayne Sconiers, President. Distribution is encouraged! For more information or to submit an article, please email its editor, Diane Merkel, at WaltonCountyHeritage@cox.net or call 850-897-4505.